

Letters to The Times

Tribute to Allen Wardwell

His Activities on Behalf of the Russian People Are Recalled

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NEW YORK TIMES:

Allen Wardwell was a nationally known American lawyer, civic leader and philanthropist, as well as a man of rare goodness with a deep sense of responsibility for the welfare of his fellow-man. He was indeed a loyal friend of the Russian people during his long and notable career and accomplished much for their betterment.

Some thirty years ago the Russian Student Fund was founded. This was an organization formed by a Russian-American group. The principal objective of the fund was to render financial aid to Russians newly arrived in this country, particularly those of college age who desired the opportunity of studying in America. Mr. Wardwell was the keystone of this undertaking. As one who shared in the benefits of the fund I personally know well the value of what he did for us.

As a Russian lawyer who found myself upon my arrival here among the remnants of our former Russian bar, I recall how we established the Russian Lawyers' Association in the United States of America. Through this organization we were able to get assistance from our brother American lawyers in the finding of suitable assignments for our members in the field of Russian law, and also in enabling some of our younger members to become admitted to practice as attorneys in the courts of this state. The first one again who responded to our call for help was Mr. Wardwell. He formed a special committee of New York City attorneys which raised sufficient funds so that we could have our own bar association headquarters.

On Various Missions

What was done by Mr. Wardwell for Russian émigrés here in America is but a small part of the extensive work he performed for the Russian people in general. He was on at least three separate occasions a member of a mission sent from the United States to our native country to succor the Russian people.

During the Second World War Mr. Wardwell was chiefly responsible for the handling of Russian war relief. Political considerations were entirely eliminated by him in his endeavors to help the Russian people. He was moved only by the highest humanitarian purposes in the accomplishment of his fruitful work. However, Mr. Wardwell was not hesitant when circumstances made it necessary during his stay in Soviet Russia to raise his voice as a citizen and representative of freedom-loving America in defense of the rights of man under the Soviet rule. For instance, his note to Tchitcherine protesting in 1918 against the Red Terror, which is internationally known, was written in strong language and became historically the first warning from this country to the Soviet oppressors as to the "inalienable rights of man."

I humbly trust that these few lines will in some measure express to Mr. Wardwell's wife, the members of his family, of his distinguished law firm of Davis, Polk, Wardwell, Sunderland and Kiendl, and his numerous friends the thought that the hearts of the Russians whom he befriended throughout the years are full of gratitude and eternal remembrance of him as our dear good friend.

MICHAEL J. PETCHKOVSKY

New York, Dec. 5, 1953.